

Administrator: The Board

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Proposition 3

Supplement to the Programme of Principles concerning the starting point for lobbying work

Covering letter

Proposition 3: Supplement to Programme of Principles concerning the starting point for lobbying work

Introduction

At the request of the member unions, the Board has undertaken to clarify its starting point for lobbying work explaining how SFS should conduct itself in relation to organisations which do not share SFS' values in accordance with the Charter.

The Board is putting forward the proposal as we have identified that the need for a starting point for lobbying work should be clarified. It has existed previously, but for various reasons has disappeared as a governing document.

Work process

At the Board meeting in December, the Board decided to put forward a proposition to SFSFUM 2021 which deals with the issue. The Board has had several discussions both internally and with member unions at the member meetings. The Board has had a number of considerations when the proposal was formulated. There have been numerous discussions on which concepts should be used, what these concepts comprise and the result of any potential application.

Comments on proposals included in the Programme of Principles

The proposal is based on the response that the Board has received from the member unions, as well as on the Charter's chapter 1, section 2 "Values". Further, it states that SFS is a member-governed organisation based on fundamental democratic principles. This is expanded to include texts on respect for democratic elections, that democracy is a prerequisite for effective student influence and students' security, and also that democracy is based on certain principles that also reoccur in item 3 in the aforementioned paragraph.

As an interest organisation for students and student unions, the Board believes that, based on the organisation's purpose, it is important that SFS cooperates with the government as well as with associated institutions and authorities such as the Swedish Higher Education Authority or the Swedish Council for Higher Education.

Success in democratic elections which leads to a majority in parliament gives parties the right to form a government. The Board has realised that it is more important that SFS as an organisation can collaborate with a such a government, even if it is constituted by parties which do not share SFS' values, than that SFS takes a demonstrative and passive position in relation to such a government. It means that,

within the prevailing democratic order, SFS will cooperate with the government and its authorities even if the government wishes to pursue a policy with which SFS does not sympathise.

One important component in the democratic society, and particularly for a democratic organisation with the remit to represent an interest group, is openness towards the world around it and an insight and willingness to understand it. It is of great importance that internal and external parties can access information about SFS' organisation. There is not currently any regulation concerning this within SFS, and through the Board's proposal, the General Assembly is articulating the importance of SFS being a transparent organisation.

To conclude, the Board has clarified that we take a position in issues regardless of what other organisations think. Our purpose is to represent and protect the students' and the member unions' interests. As part of this, we are independent in formulating and implementing our opinions. The Board considers that it is important that it is clear in the Programme of Principles that SFS cooperates solely with organisations which share SFS' values, but that, as part of the lobbying work, SFS works with the state regardless of the make-up of the government.

Consequential amendments

The proposal has consequences in the Programme of Principles and the Board thus proposes a minor correction in the structure. The purpose of the proposal is to make the text more coherent. The proposal is to break up the current chapter 1 so that sections 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 end up in a new chapter, chapter 2, with the focus on SFS' view of the academy. Section 1.1, which is more internally focused, remains in its current position, at the same time as the proposed text becomes a new section 1.2. The difference between chapters 1 and 2 is, respectively, their internal and external focus.

Draft decision

The Board proposes to the General Assembly

that sections 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 in the Programme of Principles are changed into a new chapter 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 under the main heading “SFS' view on the academy”.

that, as proposed, sections are added to the Programme of Principles under a new section 1.2 called “Starting point for lobbying work”.

that consequential amendments are made in the Programme of Principles to subsequent chapters.

Proposal:

Starting point for lobbying work

SFS' purpose is to exert influence in order to represent and protect the interests of its member unions and students. The democratic society is a prerequisite for effective student influence and for students' security. According to SFS, this presupposes an inclusive approach with respect for equality, gender equality, diversity and the equal value of all human beings. SFS is based on its members, and the organisation is structured to reflect the members we have. SFS is independent in formulating and implementing its opinions. SFS is a transparent organisation where outsiders have insight and understanding about us, in the same way, SFS must have understanding of others.

SFS conducts lobbying work in relation to external parties in order to promote students' and student unions' interests. SFS cooperates solely with organisations that share SFS' values, but conducts lobbying work in relation to all. As part of its lobbying, SFS works in relation to the government, regardless of its composition.. Success in free and public elections gives access to democracy's institutions and the outcome must be respected. Democratic principles must be safeguarded.